



Growing Successful Readers: Using Research as a Lens to Study Language and Early Reading Programs

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Our Journey Today

The real voyage of discovery consists, not of seeking new landscapes, but in seeing through new eyes.

Marcel Proust

What gives us our new eyes?

- ✓ Surge of scientific knowledge about the importance of the early years
- ✓ Compelling evidence of what is important for children to know and be able to do

Reinforced by early education
federal policy



Implementing this knowledge...



Preschool curricula are too often "a potpourri of activities" that make "a rather flabbier curriculum than one might want for challenging children What circulates is a mix of conventional wisdom and scraps of research conclusions."

Jerome Bruner





Bottom line...



Research Matters!





So....



IF we know what young children need to know and be able to do,
THEN, we know what teachers need to teach, and
THEN, we know what language and early reading programs should address.

Children must have opportunities to learn what is important.



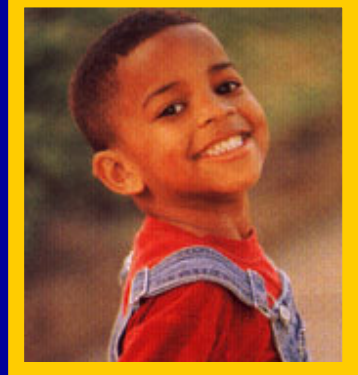
Our focus...



What are the KEY CONCEPTS that define the language and early reading knowledge for young learners?

To identify the key concepts requires that we answer two questions:

- Is there research evidence of its potential?
- Is it predictive of later learning?





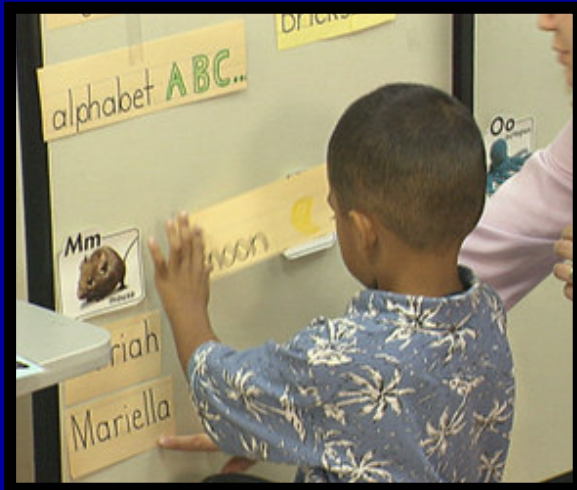
Key Concepts in Language

LANGUAGE

Comprehension



- Children talk often with others
- They stay on and extend a topic of conversation, and ask questions
- They use language for different purposes
- They take turns talking
- They tell rudimentary stories



Vocabulary

- Children use new words in their own talk
- They acquire vocabulary that encompasses many knowledge domains



Key Concepts in Early Reading



Oral Language *

- Children demonstrate oral language skills.



Phonological Awareness*

- They demonstrate sensitivity to, manipulation of, and use of sounds in words.



Key Concepts in Early Reading



Print Knowledge

- They demonstrate knowledge of the units of print (letters, words), book language, and recognize some familiar words.



Alphabet Knowledge*

- They can name letters, link letters with words, and demonstrate the ability to translate print to sound and sound to print (letter-to-sound).



Key Concepts in Early Reading



Background Knowledge

- They acquire vocabulary and information about the world; they use these 'tools' to construct relationships and categories, to figure out things, and to solve problems.



Self Regulation

- They acquire ways to control themselves, to channel their emotions in useful ways, and to focus.



Print Motivation

- They demonstrate an interest in and enjoyment of books. They enjoy being read to, play with books, and pretend to write.



Build Forward to Later Expectations



Key Concepts connect to Key Concepts that lay ahead...

Early Reading

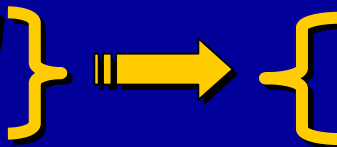
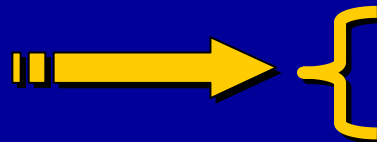
Preschool

- oral language

- phonological processing

- print knowledge

- alphabet knowledge



Primary Grades

- reading vocabulary
- decoding
- reading comprehension

- alphabetics
- fluency and spelling

- decoding and spelling

From Research to Program

Does the program provide children with opportunities to learn (with activities) that address the key language and early reading concepts (oral language, background knowledge, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge)?

But WHY is this important to know?

- ✓ Is the program over-represented in some key concept areas and under-represented in others?
- ✓ What does this program do to help young children build their knowledge of key concepts required for reading success in the elementary grades?

An opportunity to learn WHAT?

- Review construction. Ask the children to name things discussed in yesterday's lesson. Remind them that *construction* means "putting things together." Explain that they "constructed" a song this morning. Invite them to help you make a list of things that can be constructed.

An opportunity to learn WHAT?

- Reread the book *A Birthday Basket for Tia*.
- Ask the children about things they have made. Discuss something you have made.

An opportunity to learn WHAT?

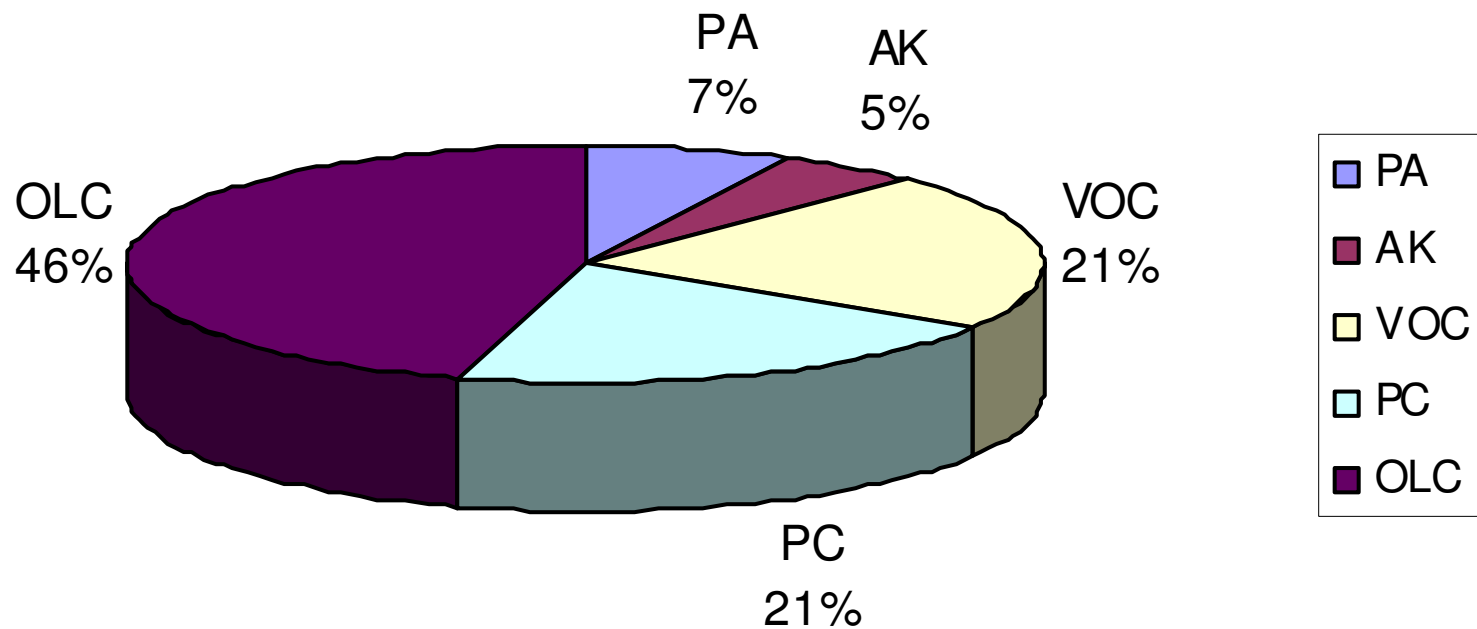
- Have the children listen to you say a sentence. Explain that you will place a blank Word Card in the Pocket Chart for each word you say.... Place a blank card in the Pocket Chart as you say each word. To help the children hear the number of words, pause between each word. Ask the children to count the number of words in the sentence.

YOUR TASK

Note which key concept is linked to each activity.

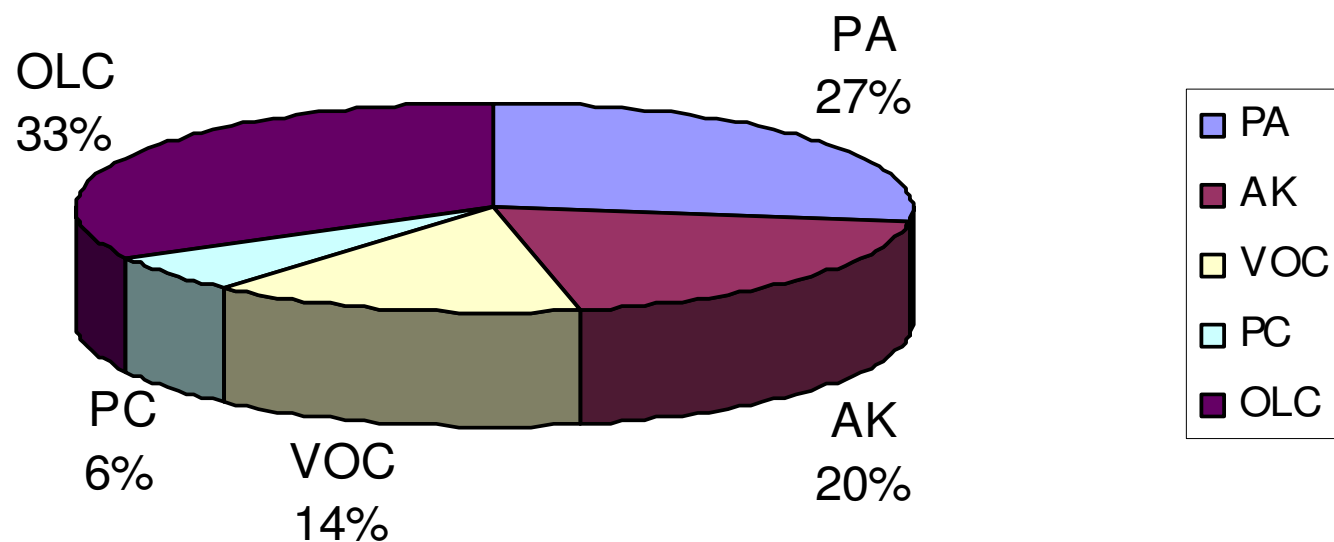
Strengths?

Children might need more of what?



Strengths?

Children might need more of what?



Conclusion:
*A single program may not
adequately address
all key concepts*

A Central Program
with
Supplemental Program(s)



And the research sets another
challenge...

**LEARNING TRAJECTORIES
or
DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCES**



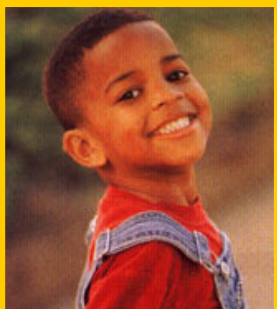
Learning Trajectory of Language



Explains past events in detail to others and has a vocabulary of 6200 words by second grade



Talks in complete sentences and has a vocabulary of 1500 words



Expresses ideas with two to three word utterances

WORDS....

- Root Words

- Words that help children 'grow' more words
 - E.g., clear, unclear, clearly; beauty, beautiful, beautifully, beautician

- Rare Words

- Specialized vocabulary words
 - E.g., trumpet, money, blocks

Research Finding

Verbal abilities are consistently the best predictors of later reading achievement.

Scarborough, 2001

Research Finding

Vocabulary growth at age 3 is strongly associated with reading comprehension at the end of grade 3.

Hart & Risley, 2003

Research Finding

Children's store of specialized vocabulary (rare words) and stock of root words are critical predictors of future reading performance.

Biemiller, 2003

Research Finding

Children adding fewer than one word per day generally falter and fall below grade level in 3rd grade and beyond in reading comprehension.

Hart & Risley, 2003

Research Finding

To develop vocabulary that propels future reading comprehension, programs must build children's strong foundation of root and rare words through multiple exposures.

Stahl, 2003

Learning Trajectory of Phonological Awareness

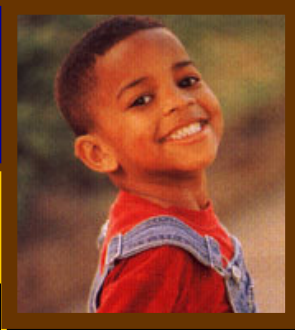


Onset-Rime
Phonemes



Syllabication
Onset-Rime

Alliteration
Sentence Segmenting



Rhyming
Alliteration



Listening
Rhyming

Phonological Awareness

Listening - poems, songs, fingerplays

Rhyming - man, can, fan, ran

Alliteration - bee, boy, baby, bat

Sentence Segmenting -

The/boy/ran/into/the/forest/.

Syllable Blending and Segmenting -

ba/by/sit/ter = babysitter; for/est = forest

Phonological Awareness, Cont.

- Onset-rime Blending and Segmenting -
st/and = stand, b/and = band; stand =
st/and, band = b/and
- Phonemic Manipulation - band = b/a/n/d;
stand = st/a/n/d

Research Finding

Discriminating units of language (i.e., words, segments, phonemes) are linked to successful reading.

National Reading Panel Report, 2003

Research Finding

Researchers caution against too much attention to rhyming; rhyming has not been found to be a significant predictor of children's reading skills.

Muter & Diethelm, 2001;
Mann & Foy, 2003

Research Finding

Research indicates that phonological awareness and phonemic awareness are meta-linguistic abilities. Children must not only be able to recite and play with sound units, they must develop an understanding that sound units map onto whole or parts of written language.

Adams, 1990

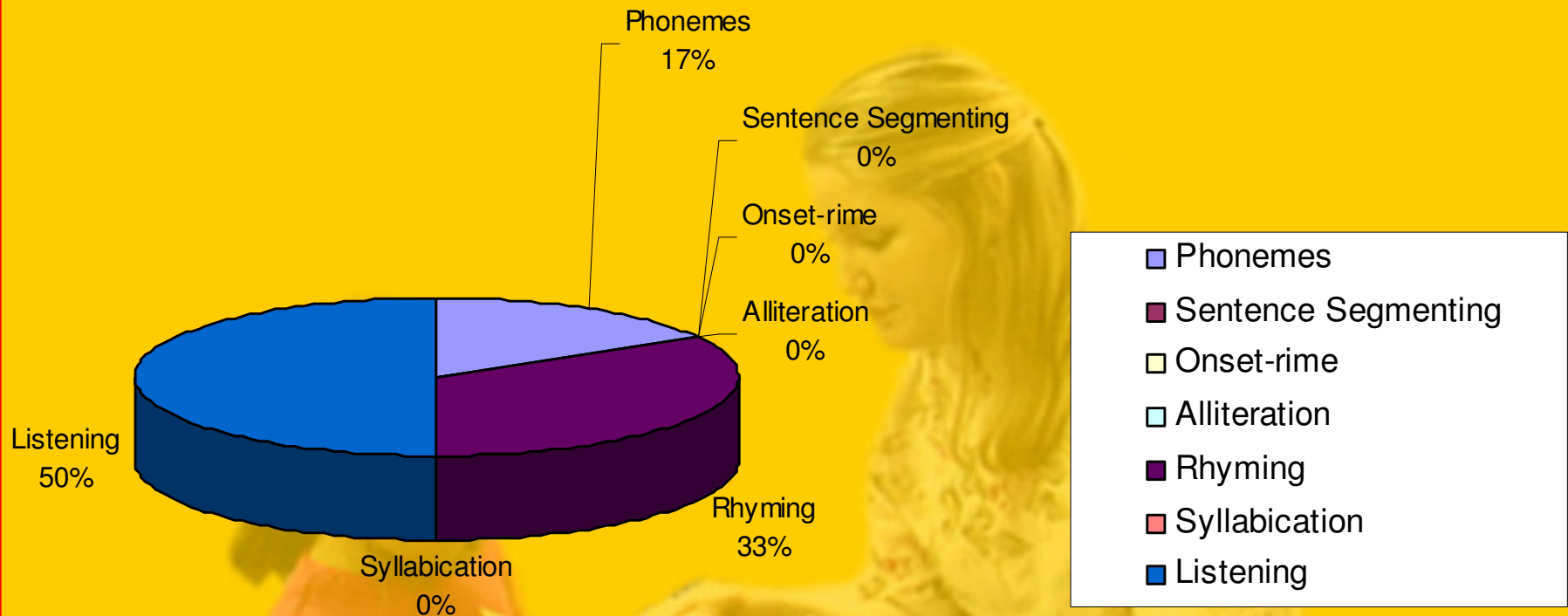
Research Finding

Research indicates that PA knowledge can be increased via direct, systematic instruction.

Bus & van IJzendorp, 1999;
Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998

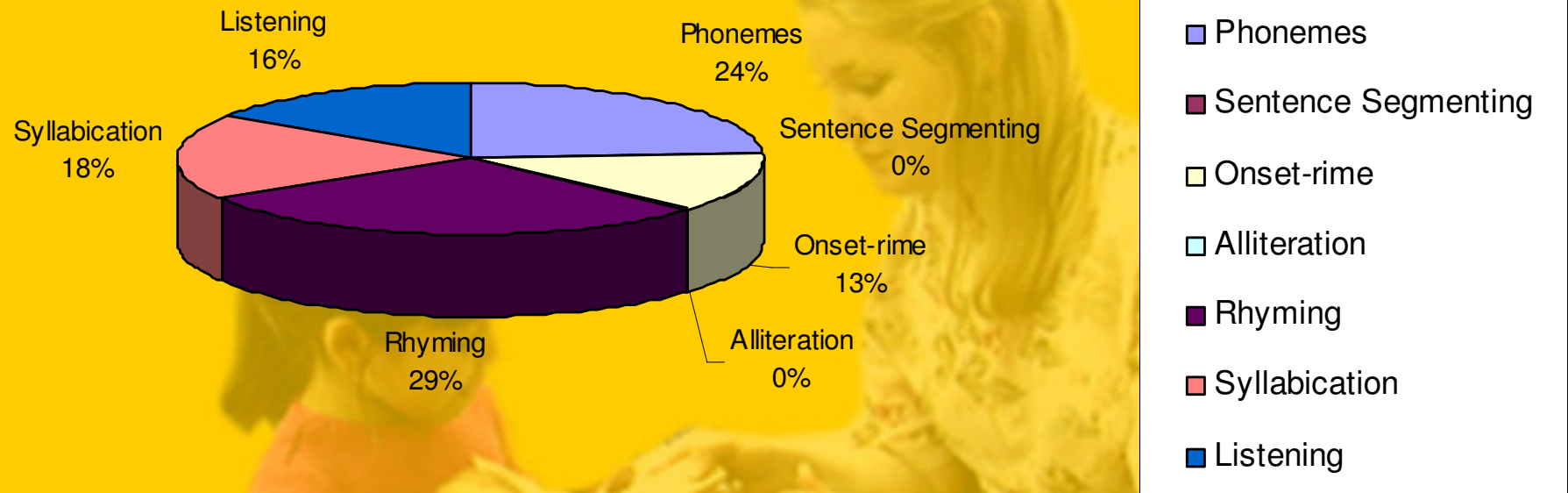
Strengths?

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Strengths?

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Learning Trajectory in Alphabet Knowledge

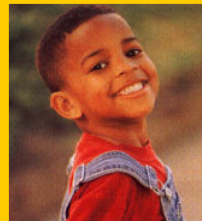


Link letters with
sounds



Produce letters

Name familiar
letters



Say letter
names

Research Finding

Knowledge of the alphabet is a strong predictor of short- and long-term reading success. Its apparent influence on later reading is NOT about knowing the letters per se. Rather, the learning of the letter names MEDIATES the ability to remember the sounds associated with the letters.

Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Ehri, 1979

Research Finding

Given the complexities of the visually distinct forms of letters (upper case, lower case, printed form), current learning theory suggests teaching one version of the letters at a time. The research is not clear on which (upper or lower case).

Adams, 1990

Research Finding

Research indicates that alphabet knowledge can be increased via direct, systematic instruction.

Bus & van IJzendorp, 1999;
Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998

Research Finding

Research has identified a linking letters to sound sequence from selecting a letter to match a spoken letter sound, to producing the sound a letter makes, to writing the letter that a sound makes.

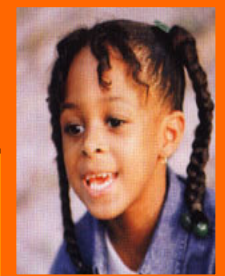
Dodd & Carr, 2003; Torgeson, et al., 1997



Learning Trajectory in Print Knowledge



graphic awareness (the ability to visually recognize environmental print, letters, and words)



general concepts about the purposes and functions of print

Print Knowledge

✓ Print functions

- Purposes/functions of print

✓ Print Conventions

- read print, not pictures
- directional orientation
- print components (letter, word, sentence)
- punctuation

✓ Book Concepts

- title, author

Research Findings

- *Research identifies two instructional contexts for the teaching of print awareness:*
 - *Dramatic play provides an environment for children to engage in a variety of functional literacy activities.*

Neuman & Roskos, 1997; Vukelich, 1994

- *Storybook reading provides a key means through which young children acquire book concepts and print conventions.*

Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Neuman, 1999

THE TASK

- WHICH Print Knowledge skills are addressed in the program under investigation?
 - Does the program provide teachers with guidance in how to develop dramatic play settings?
 - Does the program provide teachers with guidance in how to develop children's print awareness through the reading of narrative and informative stories?

Background Knowledge

Program guides teachers in how to provide opportunities for children to acquire vocabulary and information about the world.

- around 'powerful' topics
- topics that help the children understand their world

THE TASK

WHAT 'powerful' topics does the program under investigation use to provide children with opportunities to acquire vocabulary and information about the world?

Considerations...Considerations....

- **Central Program**

- Uncover the strengths of a program as it relates to consistency with the key language and literacy concepts research base

- **Additional Program**

- Select supplemental program to 'fill-in' those key component areas not adequately addressed by the additional program



What have we done today?

Used new language and early
reading research as a lens
to study a language and
early reading program



Children have different needs!

